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H A W A I I .

It seems to me that it would be more than a blunder, that it would almost
be a crime to refuse annexation.

S P E E C H

OF

HON. HORACE G. SNOVER,
OF MICHIGAN,

IN THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

TUESDAY, JUNE 14, 1898.

WASHINGTON.

1898.
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Mr. W. A. Smith

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S P E E C H
OF
HON. HORACE G. SNOVER.

The House having under consideration the joint resolution (H. Res. 259) to provide for annexing the Hawaiian Islands to the United States—

Mr. SNOVER said:

Mr. SPEAKER: It seems to me that a glance at the map of the world and a careful study of the situation of the Hawaiian Islands and their relations to the coasts of the Pacific Ocean must be followed by the conviction that possession and control of them are absolutely essential to the United States. They are a necessity to this Government. The logic of the events that have transpired in the present year has impressed this upon the mind and judgment of every thinking man as never before. The gentleman from Missouri [Mr. CLARK] on Saturday last, in speaking upon this question, paid a well-deserved tribute to General Jackson and drew a glowing picture of the battle of New Orleans and of the magnificent achievement of the conqueror of Florida, with inferior numbers of raw and undisciplined volunteers, over the seasoned veterans who had fought under the eye of Wellington in Spain, and closed the incident with the question, "Did he need any island behind him?"

I would without hesitation answer "No." General Jackson, however, like the skillful general he was, took advantage of every resource in his control to make his position secure, to place every possible obstacle in the pathway of the attacking foe, and obtained a great victory under apparently adverse circumstances. If the possession of an island would have added in the slightest degree to his military resources, or would have furnished an additional means of defense to his army or country, the same iron will that

afterwards, in 1833, nullified nullification would not have hesitated to take an island or anything else to aid his purpose. And right here let us look for a moment at the wonderful changes that have taken place since that time which have revolutionized military methods and changed political theories.

The battle of New Orleans was fought January 8, 1815. The treaty of Ghent was signed on December 24, 1814, two weeks before, so that the bloodiest battle of the war of 1812 was fought long after the signing of peace articles, and had not the slightest influence on the result.

The news of the signing of the treaty of Ghent was not received here until some weeks after the battle, for the reason that communications over the ocean were only possible by means of sailing vessels, the swiftest of which required from a month to six weeks to cross the Atlantic. The power of steam for the propulsion of vessels was practically unknown. It was not applied to railroads until 1830, and the use of electricity for transmission of news did not commence until 1844. Since then space has been annihilated, so far as the transmission of news is concerned, and for other purposes far distant States and nations are as close together now as towns of adjoining counties were at that time.

The signing of the treaty of peace between Spain and the United States, wherever it takes place, whether at London, Berlin, Paris, St. Petersburg, Geneva, or Hongkong, will be known in every nook and corner of the globe within as many minutes as it required weeks to communicate the treaty of Ghent. One can now converse with his friend as if sitting by his side, even when so far apart as New York and Chicago; and the hour is near at hand when oral conversation will be possible between London and San Francisco or Boston and Honolulu. Steam and electricity have become the absorbing factors in all the problems of the age, whether military or civic, private or public, local or general.

In all our wars with foreign nations up to the present difficulty with Spain our naval vessels were built of wood, and the motive power was the wind, a power universal and omnipresent, accessible to all nations and individuals, and ever ready to do the will of the mariner, whether in peaceful or warlike pursuits.

Given free access to the motive power, an equal footing with

competitors, American genius, ingenuity, and skill have always been able to build ships of a speed and strength equaled by few of the modern nations and excelled by none. With wooden ships and broad sails spread to the wind, manned by our hardy seamen and commanded by men whose names will ever shine in history and be household words throughout the Republic, the United States Navy covered itself with glory in our earlier wars.

The *Bon Homme Richard*, the *Constitution*, the *Wasp*, the *Peacock*, the *President*, are proud names in our early annals, and the fame of John Paul Jones, Decatur, Hull, Bainbridge, Perry, and McDonough have not faded by the addition to the record of the names of the heroes of our civil war, Farragut, Porter, Cushing, and Ericsson—who won distinction in a new type of vessel—and will not grow dim before the transcendent glory of the heroes of the present year, Dewey and Hobson. The clumsy man-of-war of the sixteenth century would have been able to defeat the multitude of Roman galleys that battled for the control of the world at Actium.

Nelson's flagship at Trafalgar would have been more than a match for the fleets of Christian and Moslem that met at Lepanto, and the battle ship of to-day, single handed and alone, could destroy the combined squadrons of France and Great Britain that contested for the supremacy of the Mediterranean at Aboukir. Heavy guns, power of resistance to projectiles, and, above all, speed, are the essential elements in the naval contests of the present. Motive power obtained by harnessing the winds can no longer be relied upon. The wooden sailing frigate is obsolete.

The efficiency of the modern naval squadron depends very largely upon its supply of coal and its ability to replenish its supply as fast as it is exhausted. Without coal its motive power is gone and its great guns useless. Such being the case, the strategic importance of the Hawaiian Islands as a coaling and refitting station for that part of our Navy stationed in the Pacific Ocean must be recognized, as well as the importance of preventing its falling into the hands of those with whom future complications may arise, in which case, instead of being a bulwark of defense, it would be a vantage ground of offense and a menace to our Pacific coast.

President Tyler, as early as 1842, recognized the superior interests of the United States in these islands, and said, in substance, that the Government should prevent any of the great powers from gaining control of them. This was at a time when the importance to us was infinitely less than now. If the United States annexes Hawaii she will be able to advance her line of defense 2,000 miles westward from the Pacific coast.

In 1823, when the celebrated Monroe doctrine was first promulgated, we had very little Pacific coast to defend, and under the conditions of naval warfare at that time Hawaii was of no special importance to us. But their annexation to-day is in strict consonance with every principle involved in the Monroe doctrine. It will do more to preserve "America for Americans" than many millions invested in battle ships, will make those already built available, and will make the islands a perpetual warning to all hostile and prying powers to keep hands off the affairs of the American republics, great and small.

Annexation has been favored by some of our greatest statesmen and military commanders. Annexation is desired by the Hawaiian Government itself. It is, I believe, eagerly hoped for by the great majority of our people. The Delphic Oracle charged the Greeks to depend on their navy, their "wooden walls." The navy of England has been her great means of defense and offense for hundreds of years, and has given her the proud place she holds among the nations. Our Navy has been a source of pride to us from its very infancy.

Since the commencement of the present war with Spain it has increased our prestige a hundredfold, and has caused our flag to be honored and respected in the four quarters of the globe as never before in our history. It seems to me that it would be more than a blunder, that it would be almost a crime, to refuse annexation offered to us by a willing people and of so much importance and value to us. Let us not be like the base Indian, who "threw a pearl away richer than all his tribe." [Applause.]



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